

V. REMARKS

In the final Office Action, claims 1-10 are provisionally rejected on the grounds of non-statutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 3-7 of copending Application No. 10/697,238. According to the Prosecution History, Application No. 10/697,238 was abandoned on January 15, 2009, for failing to respond the Office Action issued on June 12, 2008. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In the final Office Action, claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Motegi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,817,946) in view of Basturk et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,600,527). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Re: Features of the Present Invention

The present invention relates to a gaming machine characterized in that the light guiding plate is provided with an opening in an area at which the symbols on the variable display device are displayed through the transparent liquid crystal display panel (see, Amended Claim 1, Paragraph [0027] of the Specification and FIGS. 4 and 3(a) - US Patent Application Publication).

As described above, the features of the present invention are summarized that the light guiding plate making up the backlight of the liquid crystal panel has an opening through which the symbols on the variable display device disposed behind the light guiding plate can be viewed.

Further, the gaming machine according to the present invention is characterized by a position of the opening: The opening is provided at a position that is part of an area at which the symbols on the variable display device are displayed through the transparent liquid crystal display panel. This reduces such a possibility that the visibility of images on the liquid crystal display panel is decreased in an area of the light guiding plate, the area at which the opening is not formed.

The Cited References fail to disclose/suggest the above-described features of the present invention that the light guiding plate of the liquid crystal panel is provided with an opening through which elements such as symbols positioned behind the light guiding plate can be easily viewed from a front side.

Cited Reference US 200510192090 A1 to Muir et al. discloses an invention relating to a gaming machine display in which the liquid crystal display (LCD) 50 includes the LCD monitor 68; the transparent panel 84 of the backlight; the shutter mechanism 76; the monitor housing 60; and the reels 18, in this order from the front.

As shown in FIG. 4 of US 200510192090, the monitor housing 60 is provided with the plurality of openings 64 through which the reels 18 situated behind the monitor housing 60 can be viewed. However, the transparent panel 84 of the backlight is not provided with an opening for ensuring the visibility of the symbols on the variable display device (see FIG. 4 and Paragraphs [0056] [0066] of the Specification of US 200510192090), unlike the present invention.

As described above, the present invention attains advantageous effects that the light can be guided from the light guiding plate to the liquid crystal panel while the visibility of the symbols on the variable display device can be ensured through the opening of the light guiding plate. This is because the light guiding plate according to the present invention, making up the backlight of the liquid crystal panel is provided with the opening making up a transparent area at which the symbols on the variable display device can be viewed from the front side.

Thus, the present invention produces remarkable effects that the symbols on the variable display device can be transparently displayed in a clear manner on the liquid crystal panel disposed at the forefront.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the cited art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of the claims as discussed above. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art could not combine the features of the applied art to arrive at the claimed invention because the applied art is devoid of

all the features of the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are allowable over the applied art.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Newly-added claims 11-19 include features not shown in the applied art.

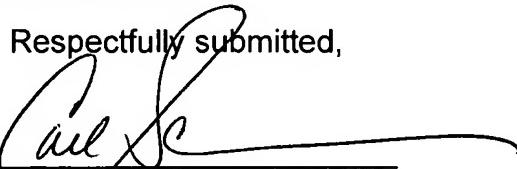
Further, Applicants assert that there are also reasons other than those set forth above why the pending claims are patentable. Applicants hereby reserve the right to submit those other reasons and to argue for the patentability of claims not explicitly addressed herein in future papers.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper or if a Petition for Extension of Time is required for timely acceptance of the same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013 for any such fees and Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

By:


Carl Schaukowitch
Reg. No. 29,211

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RADER, FISHMAN & GRAUER PLLC
1233 20th Street, N.W. Suite 501
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel: (202) 955-3750
Fax: (202) 955-3751
Customer No. 23353

Enclosure(s): Amendment Transmittal
 Petition for Extension of Time (two months)